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Only A Smoother Sales Talk for Intervention in Cuba

There were two ways in which Castro could have betrayed his revolution. One was to let it slide into totalitarianism. The other was to shelve his promises of economic reform and make the private deals Latin American revolutionaries usually make with the big U.S. interests in their countries. If he had chosen that kind of betrayal, would the State Department be issuing lengthy statements documenting it, would the CIA be financing training camps for rebels to overthrow him?

The Weakest Point in the "White Paper"

There are a second set of questions by which independent opinion abroad, particularly in Latin America, will judge our new U.S. "white paper" on Cuba. Did Castro slide toward the totalitarian camp because he wanted to, or because U.S. policies left him no alternative? The succession of tragic events which left Castro completely dependent on the Soviet bloc for his oil supplies, his sugar market and his hopes of industrialization—were they the result of his own advance planning or a reaction to the hostility of the U.S. oil companies and the ending of the sugar quota? The dynamics of any quarrel is a complex process, and history will long dispute this question. But one thing is clear. Perhaps the weakest point in the U.S. government's brilliantly written document on Cuba is that section in which it tries to argue that the U.S. was not responsible. Here it lapses into a significant vagueness. It is true that Dr. Castro was "cordially received" on his visit here in the spring of 1959. But it is also true that he was unable to obtain an official invitation, that Secretary Herter saw him in a hotel room to underscore the unofficial nature of his visit, that Latin America's greatest popular hero in our time was treated as a second class visitor. Aside from the statement that "American officials made clear to him the willingness of the U.S. government to discuss his country's economic needs" there are no references to any specific offer to help. None was made. The document refers to suggested negotiations but these were cocerned with prompt, immediate and adequate payment for U.S. properties taken, not with the offer of a helping hand in the economic and social reforms Castro had promised. Nobody can know for certain what was in Fidel's mind but it is clear that we began pushing him in the direction of finding help elsewhere very early.

Even now, despite the claim that we are only opposed to Castro because he "betrayed" the revolution, the document is silent in the area of economic and social reform. This would be a powerful document indeed if in it the U.S. government plainly said that it would not ask the Cuban people to turn back the clock on agrarian reform nor to restore the public utility properties which had so long been notorious for high rates and bad service. But aside from an approving reference to "the early projects of land reform" (where, one wonders, do we draw the line?) there is no pledge not to ask return of the great cattle and sugar properties. The rhetorical references to "the spirit of Jose Marti" would not seem so empty if they had been accompanied by some plain language on aid to the industrialization program and the fight against monoculture which Marti saw as twin necessities to end Cuba's poverty and gave it economic independence.

There is no denial in this document nor elsewhere of the mounting volume of reports in conservative anti-Castro U.S. publications that U.S. influence and CIA funds are strengthening the right wingers among the exiles, and forcing the left-wingers to acquiesce in a program which would restore the banks, the utilities and the land (*Baltimore Sun,* March 5) under pain of losing financial aid. The April 8 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* carries an article on the exiles which makes some additional revelations. It says of our favorite exile group, Varona's Democratic Revolutionary Front, that it is "honest, Catholic, conservative and sternly anti-Communist" but "unfortunately" it has "welcomed into its ranks a number of old politicians of the pre-Batista regimes and these men, in the eyes of most Cubans, do not represent the new Cuba the revolution sought to create." As a result Varona's movement has been losing ground to the Revolutionary Movement of the People, headed by Manuel Ray, an ex-Fidelista, "Leftist by U.S. standards", who wants "Fidelismo without Fidel." While this movement agrees to restore, or pay for, expropriated lands and certain business properties, the *Post* article continues, "it insists, though, that the light, power and telephone companies should be nationalized, which may account for the fact that our help to Ray's group has been minuscule." While accusing Fidel of betraying the last Cuban revolution, we are planning to betray the next one.

The new document on Cuba says "the North American journalist, I. F. Stone, initially sympathetic with the Castro

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Nuclear NATO Buried By JFK?

"The U.S. has decided quietly to bury the Eisenhower Administration's proposal for an independent NATO nuclear deterrent submitted to last December's meeting of the NATO Council. It reached this conclusion partly because the plan imposes too heavy a financial burden on the European members, partly because there is no need to duplicate the existing American deterrent, which already has an 'overkill' capacity and partly because the '15 fingers on the trigger' idea is impracticable. The Americans are also opposed to an independent nuclear deterrent for Germany, the main champion of which is the German Defense Minister, Herr Strauss."

—London Sunday Times, April 2

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FOR Warns Effort to Overthrow Castro Will Poison U.S.-Latin American Relations

How the State Dept. Refused to Let A Pacifist Mission Visit Cuba

In the following account, the Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation tells the story of how the State Department refused to let it send a "peace team" to Cuba. The FOR, founded in 1915, describes itself as a religious organization "dedicated to finding solutions to intergroup and international conflicts in a spirit of love and nonviolence as taught by Jesus and other great religious leaders." The full text, released to the press March 28 but generally ignored, is printed here as evidence of the Iron Curtain we have ourselves imposed on relations with Cuba.—IFS

"The Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation vigorously protests the recent decision of the State Department refusing permission to a Fellowship sponsored 'peace team' to visit Cuba. We regret that an attempt by a group of respected leaders in church, academic and peace circles to search for means of reestablishing peaceful relations between the two governments, should be considered as not 'in the best interests of the United States.'

"Like many other Americans, the Fellowship has been deeply troubled by the wide divergence between reporting and interpretation of developments in Cuba by the general press and official government sources on the one hand, and by an impressive number of well-informed, independent observers on the other.

Half-Buffoon, Half-Knave?

"From the former, the American public have been given an account of a revolution led by a man half-buffoon, half-knave and wholly the creature of international communism, with whom it is hopeless even to seek for any agreement. From the latter, to a much more limited audience, has come the judgment that events in Cuba have marked one of the most significant, deep-going social changes in history, of profound importance to ourselves and all Latin America, and the assertion that great opportunities exist for reestablishing good relationships.

"From the former we have had a picture of a ruthless, opportunistic dictator precariously maintaining power in the midst of seething unrest and likely to be overthrown at any moment by patriotic opponents among his own people. From the latter we have reports of a government that has alienated thousands of its middle and upper-class citizens by its radical attempts to reform the economic and social structure, but which holds the devotion of the poverty-stricken peasants and workers who make up the overwhelming bulk of the population, and who could be overthrown only at a cost of enormous suffering and bloodshed.

"In the interest of resolving this difference, the Fellowship of Reconciliation sent its own reporter to Cuba last December. His report, published in the magazine, *Fellowship*, gave considerable support to the charge of misinterpretation made against the general press and government.

"In the light of these things, and in view of its own historic role in seeking means of reconciling groups and nations in conflict, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in January asked nine of its members to visit Cuba. The trip was intended to be an effort to determine for themselves the truth of developments there, and to discuss with both governmental and private persons possibilities for reducing tension and increasing understanding between the two peoples. It had been the intention of the group to include officials of our own government in its discussions, sharing with them any insights or suggestions growing out of the trip, and this intention had been communicated to our government.

"This 'reconciliation team' had plane reservations for January 20. They had to be cancelled when the State Department on January 19 officially forbade travel by American citizens to Cuba except in such instances where such travel would be 'in the best interests of the United States,' which has been interpreted to mean only journalists and business men and cases of personal or family emergency.

"The Fellowship applied immediately for permission to make the trip under the new regulations. It was not until February 14 that it was notified that the request was rejected. It then sought and received appointments to discuss this action with officials of the State Department, and on March 9 three Fellowship representatives met for extended discussions with officials from the Security and Consular Affairs Division and the Mexican and Caribbean Division of the Department.

"The Fellowship's representatives were told that they might not go to Cuba because our Government cannot afford them protection there. We recognize that the Government feels a responsibility to offer such protection to its citizens abroad, though we would not request it for ourselves. However, we do not know of a single instance in which American visitors to Cuba, other than newspapermen and counter-revolutionaries have been molested. We are aware also that similar restrictions have not been placed on travel in many parts of the world where danger to individuals is far more evident than in Cuba, and protection at least as difficult.

Policies Which Merely Worsen Relations

"We oppose the whole policy of restricting travel, as we regret our government's action in severing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Historically such acts have rarely served other than to exacerbate the situations they were meant to improve, and must frequently be followed by painful and tedious efforts eventually to reestablish, in the interests of peace and understanding, the communications so easily severed.

"Within that policy, however, we maintain that efforts to improve relations between the countries by private citizens who are favorably known to their fellow Americans, are consistent with our nation's stated goal of establishing a peaceful world. Whatever the facts may be otherwise, it seems beyond argument that any attempt to overthrow the Castro government, whether by invasion or insurrection, will result in the cruel slaughter of tens of thousands of Cubans and a residue of bitterness that is likely to poison the atmosphere of the entire hemisphere for generations.

"The Fellowship is determined to continue its efforts, in every way open to it, to find means of reconciling this dispute and averting bloodshed, and in this effort seeks the support of our fellow Americans, and particularly those whose religious faith is inextricably entangled with admonitions to return good for evil, and to 'agree with thine adversary quickly'."

The Blockaded "Peace Team"

The "Peace Team" denied permission to visit Cuba by the State Department was made up of:

Harrop and Ruth Freeman, professor of law, Cornell, housewife; Alfred Hassler, executive secretary, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and editor, Fellowship; Charles R. Lawrence, professor of sociology and anthropology, Brooklyn College, and Chairman, FOR; Robert Lyons, executive secretary, New England Regional Office, American Friends Service Committee; Wm. Stuart Nelson, dean of the college, Howard University; Mrs. Annalee Stewart, legislative secretary, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Howard Schomer, president, Chicago Theological Seminary and president Int'l FOR; Herman Will, Jr., secretary, Division of Peace and World Order, General Board of Christian Concerns of the Methodist Church.

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A Lesson for Liberals: This Is How It All Started A Quarter Century Ago

The Folly of Appealing to the Un-American Committee on the John Birchers

There are several points of interest in the exchange of letters between Congressman Henry S. Reuss (*D. Wis*) and Chairman Walter of the House Un-American Activities Committee over the John Birch Society. The first is the extent of the Society's campaign against Chief Justice Warren. Mr. Reuss wrote that his office had been "flooded with letters from throughout the country suggesting that Chief Justice Warren is a traitor and demanding his impeachment."

The second point of interest is that Mr. Reuss should turn to Mr. Walter's committee for an investigation. In his press release, Mr. Reuss said he was not asking the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee to investigate because it was already sending out a form letter over the signature of its chairman, Senator Eastland, calling the Society "a patriotic organization."

Infested by the Same Types

But anyone who has been around the Capitol for any length of time knows that the staffs of both these witch hunting committees are infested with the same types who are running the Society.

In addition, as we revealed last week, the ranking Republican on the Un-American Activities Committee, Mr. Scherer of Ohio, is an endorser of the John Birch Society. Mr. Walter himself is too able a lawyer to join in with such crackpots but basically he would regard the Society as at worst a misguided ally rather than an enemy. In any investigation by his Committee, the Society would find itself among friends.

Congressman Reuss may have written his letter to put the House Committee on the spot, but the price was to accept the assumptions on which the Committee operates. Mr. Reuss in his letter said "it would be hard to imagine more un-American propaganda activities" than those of the Birch Society and therefore asked Mr. Walter to investigate. Then Mr. Reuss went on to say:

"Propaganda organizations have the right to free speech and the right to have any investigation of their activities conducted with due process of law and full regard for fair play, but the public has the right to know who is behind these activities, how they are financed and how they are carried on."

This all sounds very plausible and attractive but this is how it all started a quarter century ago. The Un-American Activities Committee was originally set up by the Dickstein-McCormack resolution in 1934 to investigate Nazi and Fascist propaganda activities in this country. Far-seeing liberals like Maverick of Texas and Warren of North Carolina warned that it would become a menace to free institutions. Soon, under Dies of Texas, the main target of the Committee was the New Deal and its first great success, in 1938, was to defeat the saintly Frank Murphy for reelection as Governor of Michigan.

During the 30's and 40's it held an occasional hearing in which native Fascist groups were interrogated, never very harshly. This served only to give the House Committee a veneer of impartiality. To summon the John Birch Society would be a resumption of these old tactics at the expense of making it more difficult to fight the witch hunt in principle. The only firm principle is that in a free society it is no business of the government to police the arena of free debate and decide what ideas are outside the pale, or "un-American." A vigorous press is the best protection against crackpot conspiracies and the press has been doing an extraordinarily good job of exposing the John Birch Society.

Mr. Walter's reply to Mr. Reuss revealed that the House Committee "has received numerous letters regarding the John Birch Society." Mr. Walter said "most of them contain the general complaint that the organization is 'un-American', and the specific complaint that the leader of the Society has made charges of impugning the patriotism and loyalty of certain individuals."

Mr. Walter expressed the view that the individuals maligned have their remedy in the civil courts; we can just see the Chief Justice suing for libel. As for the general complaint, he said "no material information" had been received to indicate that the Committee "should, or could, be made by us under existing statute defining the authority of the Committee,"

The Committee's authority is sweeping enough to cover any activity it considers un-American, but a secret society under a Fuehrer, Nazi style, subverting faith in the Supreme Court and the White House, somehow doesn't seem "un-American" enough for Mr. Walter.

Ronald W. May

We note with sorrow the untimely death at 38 of our good friend, Ronald W. May, gifted Washington correspondent for the Madison, Wis., Capital-Times and the York, Pa., Gazette and Daily. He distinguished himself in the fight against McCarthy and it was he who last year exposed the racist influences at work behind the Un-American Activities Committee and forced the retirement of its counsel, Richard Arens.

The Acquittals in the South African Treason Trial and Our Supreme Court

All who love justice must salute with reverence the three judges, Rumpff, Kennedy and Bekker, of the South African special court which last week acquitted the remaining defendants in the South African treason trial. It is extraordinary that in the tense atmosphere of South Africa three judges would have the courage to defy white supremacist pressure and throw the State's case out of court after a four year prosecution which cost South Africa close to a half million dollars.

The prosecution began in December, 1956, with country wide police raids in which 156 men and women, white and non-white, were arrested on charges of treasonable conspiracy. The aim of the raids was to destroy the African National Congress which was accused of being Communist infiltrated. The atmosphere may be inferred from the fact that the chief export for the State testified that frequent use of the words "the people" and "democracy" were indications that the ANC's Freedom Charter was Communist inspired!

The position of the non-white in South Africa is far worse than in Mississippi. The African National Congress is regarded by Afrikaan majority opinion with far more horror than the NAACP. Yet three judges threw out the case without waiting for the full defense to be submitted.

Our Supreme Court, by comparison, has acquitted itself very poorly. Though the atmosphere here is far milder than in South Africa, our Supreme Court during the past two cold war decades has upheld one repressive measure after another, notably the first peacetime sedition act since the Administration of John Adams, in the Smith Act trials and the powers of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the Barenblatt, Braden and Wilkinson cases. We hope Justices like Frankfurter and Harlan study the South African case and see how it puts them and their pretensions to shame.

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The Fate of Nagy Is The Fate We Are Preparing For Castro

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regime, reported after a recent trip to Cuba: 'For the first time, in talking with Fidelista intellectuals, I felt that Cuba was on its way to becoming a Soviet-type popular democracy'." But, of course, the document is careful not to quote my repeated warnings against intervention in Cuba. This is a quarrel in which each side is its own worst enemy. Fidel, by the unbridled demagogy he has permitted in his press and radio attacks on other Latin American leaders, makes friends for the U.S. The U.S. government, on the other hand, makes friends for Fidel by talking as it does in this document of "the principle of non-interference by any American state in the internal or external affairs" of any other American state, while so openly fostering and training rebel forces for sabotage and civil war in Cuba. The U.S. laws and inter-American treaties against foreign intervention which we quoted in our issue of March 27 were never more openly violated than in our current efforts to overthrow Castro. For all the eloquence and polish of this new document all it adds up to is to provide the forces of reaction in our own country with a smoother sales talk for the interventionist plans begun under Eisenhower and stepped up, I regret to say, under Kennedy.

Compounding Folly With Crime

I appeal to American liberals to face up to the realities without being sucked into the war camp. Policies of which we all disapproved helped push Castro into the Soviet orbit, and now we are asked to compound those past follies with the crime of war against a neighboring people. The rationale for the attack on Cuba is exactly the same rationale with which the Russians excused their attack on Hungary.

The simple premise of this "white paper" is that since Cuba is becoming Sovietized, any action against her is justified. The simple premise of Russian action against Hungary was that since it was threatening to leave the Soviet camp any action against Hungary was justified. The fate of Nagy is the fate we are preparing for Castro, and if one was an immoral crime, so will be the other. As the tempo of intervention in Cuba rises, so will rise the tension all over Latin America. Civil war in Cuba will be accompanied by civil strife elsewhere in the hemisphere, making impossible all our plans for fostering gradual reform, forcing us to strengthen the military again in Latin America, and thereby speeding up the chain reaction of repression and revolt. Never did our country have so much need for patience and magnanimity. Never was it in greater danger than in this Lilliputian quarrel which may easily end by tearing the hemisphere apart. Cuba is not Guatemala. Time may bring many surprises, as it has in our dealings with Tito and Iraq. Let us turn back from the course of intervention before it is too late.

Latin American policy is the weak point of the Kennedy administration and may destroy its bright hope. Kennedy is following in the weak footsteps of Eisenhower, notably in maintaining the ban on travel to Cuba which Eisenhower imposed just before Kennedy's inauguration. We call attention to the document we publish this week on page two as an example of Iron Curtain tactics. The bar against travel is an effort to build a monolithic public opinion behind the interventionist forces.

Fresh Idea on the Congo

"While the constitutional problem is bound to come to the forefront of any discussion, there are, of course, underlying it several fundamental and inescapable economic and financial problems. I would draw attention in particular to the investments—investments of which the status now seems to be uncertain—which belong to the Central Government in the large mining and other companies. If the profits on these investments were available to the unified federal government envisaged in the report [of the Conciliation Commission on the Congo], it would be of great assistance to it in its work. Indeed, if the proposed Central Government were to ask the United Nations to buy out the foreign interests in these companies, as the Government of Ghana recently purchased the foreign-held gold mines, I would strongly advocate that we should meet their request. An international company in which the Congo already owned a large part of the capital could run the various enterprises for a period of years, train Congolese citizens to operate them, repay the capital out of profits, and then hand them over to the Congolese State."

—Mr. Aiken, Ireland, UN General Assembly Mar. 28

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